

December 16, 2010

The Honorable Hilary Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

We write to ask for an expeditious approval of the cross border permit for the Keystone XL pipeline. We understand that the Department of State has completed its due diligence in undertaking the required multi-agency environmental review and the Department has sufficient information to move forward with an affirmative permit decision.

The importance of the Keystone XL pipeline for American energy security and the economy are undeniable. It is noteworthy that opposition to the pipeline focuses on questionable environmental concerns while failing to recognize the significant overall benefit to Americans. As we work to develop our domestic energy resources with an “all of the above” approach, it makes sense to import from our energy-rich northern neighbor and reduce our reliance on overseas nations that are politically volatile and frequently fund terrorism against the United States.

Some opponents of the pipeline argue that Canada’s oil sands should not serve as an energy source on the basis of dramatically higher greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. In fact, as several recent third-party studies have made clear, these emissions have been on a downward trajectory on a per-barrel basis with the advent of new extraction technologies. Importantly, the Canadians are mindful of their own GHG emissions and have committed, through robust regulation and further technological innovation, to develop this vast resource in the most environmentally responsible manner possible. Moreover, the fact remains that Canadian oil, from oil sands or otherwise, will be developed regardless of our decision. The choice is, will we approve the pipeline and provide American energy security or will we see that same oil shipped to markets in Asia, increasing greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, policy arguments against the pipeline that seem preoccupied with net GHG emission increases fall by the wayside.

As with any large-scale energy project, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) lists ways of mitigating the project’s impacts. It is in the interest of all stakeholders to ensure safe transportation and access to the oil while limiting adverse environmental impacts. Interstate pipelines carrying crude oil and products across state borders are regulated by the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA). PHMSA’s regulations include standards for the safe construction and operation of

pipelines, pipe specifications, and welding standards, which are reviewed by industry to ensure the latest technologies and practices are being employed for new pipeline construction. Furthermore, pipelines are the safest, most efficient and economical way to transport these energy products as they experience the lowest frequency of accidental releases when compared to other transportation modes.

In a time when we need them most, the Keystone XL pipeline is expected to create 13,000 high-wage American construction jobs and generate millions of dollars in tax revenues for state and local governments. In addition, this pipeline will create thousands of auxiliary jobs by providing American energy security and reducing our dependence on other less stable regions of the world. It is also important to remember that the Keystone project will be completely financed by the private sector and will result in an expeditious influx of jobs, which will significantly impact the surrounding communities by generating billions of dollars in economic stimulus.

It would be a mistake for the United States to abandon an important source of energy from a major trading partner and friendly neighbor. We respectfully urge you to approve the cross border permit for the Keystone XL pipeline and move forward with the project in a timely manner. It should be the policy of this Administration to help America create jobs, spur investment, and secure our nation. All of these goals are achieved by approval of the Keystone project.

Sincerely,